

INSTRUCTION

ACCORDING TO ALLISON

BY ALLISON FISHER



Back Foot First

Like any other ball sport, pool requires that a player use their feet correctly. Can you imagine Roger Federer, a right-handed tennis player, going for a backhand winner with his left foot in front of his right foot? It just wouldn't happen. Correct foot placement is crucial to proper execution in a game like tennis. The same applies to golf, basketball, bowling, and certainly billiards.

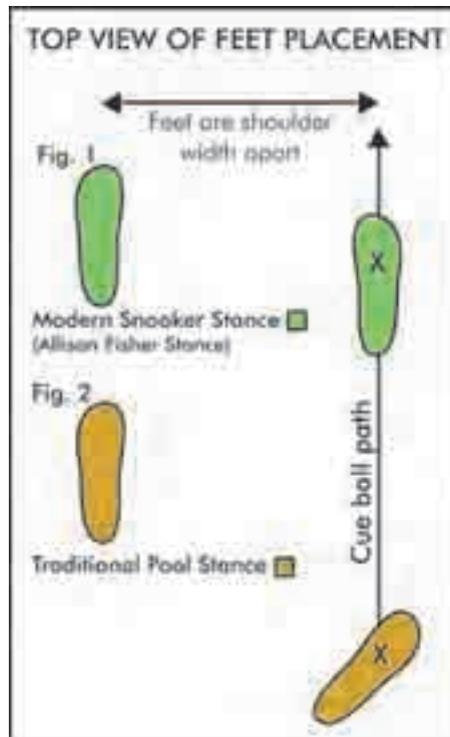
So what is the correct placement of the feet when playing pocket billiards? Well, surely most of you have read user manuals depicting the correct placement. And more than likely you've noted that there are differing opinions. One thing is for certain: All teachers will agree that your stance needs to be solid and balanced. But more importantly, I want to tell you something about how your feet alignment can affect your accuracy when playing the shot. Let me explain ...

Just like our tennis-player example, no matter how good you are at hitting the ball or how good your eye-hand coordination is, if you are not correctly aligned with the shot, the ball will not go where you intend. In billiards, it is simply not good enough to have the fundamentals of a good stance and then not pay attention to how your feet are aligned in relation to the shot. And the most important foot in this regard is the back foot. For a right-handed player, this is your right foot.

Once you have surveyed the table and calculated the angle of the shot (see Ingredient #2), you absolutely must get the center of your right foot in line with the path you wish to send the cue ball on.

Then, and then only, fall down naturally into your stance.

Both feet should be shoulder-width apart for balance. You should feel completely rooted, like a tree with your weight coming slightly forward. As you do this,



you should also naturally shift the majority of your weight to the front leg, which will then automatically move your hip away from your cue arm. The position of the front foot is nowhere near as important as the back foot. Depending on your body type, this positioning can vary dramatically. But the back foot needs to be properly aligned.

Why? Because as soon as your back foot is aligned correctly, your entire body will be also, and then the mechanics of the shot delivery will take over. For any decent player, it is relatively easy at this point to play the shot with eyes closed.

As a modern snooker player, I tend to face the shot (Figure 1); therefore, both of my feet point in the same direction as the line of the shot with my left foot slightly ahead of the right. Most pool players tend to point the right foot out and only parallel the left foot with the line of the cue stick (Figure 2).

Both of these stances work very well. You will notice that either way, the center of the right foot stays in line with the shot. The only difference is that one stance may be more comfortable for you.

In traditional pool, a player will turn the right foot out and have the left much more in front and spread more. This is also typical of the old fashion snooker stance of the legendary Joe Davis.

In both stances, your left knee should be slightly bent, and depending on your height, you may choose to slightly bend the right leg as well. Be careful not to lean back, however, because this could tend to make you jump up on the shot. What we want from our stance is to be able to send the cue forward effortlessly. Having your weight forward will make this easier. ♦

Co-authored by Paul Turner, inventor of the Allison Fisher Billiard Aim Trainer (www.billiardaimtrainer.com).